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Year: 2018

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## **A Collection of Scenarios in Military Medical Ethics to Support Training and Research**

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Posted at the Zurich Open Repository and Archive, University of Zurich

ZORA URL: <https://doi.org/10.5167/uzh-160976>

Journal Article

Published Version

Originally published at:

Messelken, Daniel (2018). A Collection of Scenarios in Military Medical Ethics to Support Training and Research. *International Review of the Armed Forces Medical Services*, 91(4):75-77.

# A Collection of Scenarios in Military Medical Ethics to Support Training and Research.

By D. MESSELKEN. Switzerland



**Daniel MESSELKEN**

Daniel MESSELKEN is a research associate at the Centre for Ethics at the University of Zurich since 2009. He is heading the Zurich Centre for Military Medical Ethics (CMME) at the Centre of Competence for Military and Disaster Medicine (CC MDM). The CMME conducts research and training in the field of military medical ethics, in partnership with the medical services of the Swiss Armed Forces and the Center of Reference for Education on IHL and Ethics of the International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM). After his studies in philosophy and political science (Leipzig, Paris), D. Messelken gained his doctorate in philosophy from Leipzig University in 2010. Since 2012, he is a member of the Board of Directors of EuroISME (European Chapter of the International Society for Military Ethics). His current research fields include military medical ethics, military ethics, disaster bioethics, and applied ethics.

The website of the CMME is <https://www.militarymedicaethics.ch> and the one of the Center of Reference for Education on IHL and Ethics of the ICMM is <https://melac.ch>

## RESUME

**Collection de scénarios dans le domaine de l'éthique médicale militaire utilisables pour l'enseignement et la recherche.**

*Les scénarios sont des outils essentiels pour l'enseignement, l'instruction et la recherche dans le domaine de l'éthique. La collection qui a été constituée représente une ressource irremplaçable pour les instructeurs et les chercheurs. Elle est utilisable par le personnel médical militaire envoyé en opérations ainsi que par ceux qui sont chargés de la préparation opérationnelle.*

*Pour atteindre ces objectifs; la collection du centre d'éthique médicale militaire :*

- Rassemble et publie les retours d'expérience, les rapports et les scénarios dans une base de données.
- Offre l'occasion aux professionnels de retour de mission d'apporter (de façon anonyme) leurs expériences et de les échanger avec d'autres.
- Des textes de mise en contexte et du matériel pédagogique ou d'auto-enseignement y sont ajoutés au cours du temps.
- La thématique de la collection pourra être enrichie en y incluant des cas de dilemmes éthiques posés en missions humanitaires, qui convergent souvent avec ceux de leurs équivalents militaires.

**KEYWORDS:** Military Medical Ethics, Training, Case Studies, E-Learning.

**MOTS-CLÉS :** Ethique médicale militaire, Formation, Etudes de cas, Apprentissage en ligne.

## RELEVANCE OF SCENARIOS FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH

To be effective, training in military medical ethics (MME) should be based on real-world (or at least realistic) scenarios and case descriptions. Only then can training cover the issues which are relevant for missions and prepare the personnel for the ethical challenges they could encounter. In a similar way, research as the basis of education and training should build on realistic assumptions. Eventually, it is more relevant if oriented

towards the needs and issues that arise on the field and that actually create challenges during missions. Thus, the availability of reports and realistic scenarios in military medical ethics is a paramount prerequisite for both practice and training as well as theory and research.

The access to and the collection of observations and reports on ethical challenges for military health care personnel during missions has been proven difficult for several reasons. For example, those returning from missions cannot be easily approached by people outside their

organisations and they may sometimes also be reluctant to openly talk about their experiences. Thus, an exchange of experiences and a common ground for research and preparation of future missions could possibly be improved by a database that makes accessible scenarios and reports in the field of military medical ethics. It may also encourage others to share their experiences and help building a collection that covers a wide variety of ethical issues in military medicine.

## HISTORY AND CURRENT STATUS OF THE MME SCENARIO COLLECTION

The desideratum of a MME scenario collection has been reiterated during a joint workshop organized jointly by the *NATO Center of Excellence for Military Medicine* (COE MILMED) and the *ICMM Center of Reference for Education on IHL and Ethics* (ICMM CRef), which was held in Munich on 14-16 September 2015. The *Zurich Center for Military Medical Ethics* (CMME) has participated actively in that workshop and agreed to set up and host the MME scenario collection in close cooperation with the ICMM CRef. It was agreed, that the MILMED COE and other relevant institutions will be consulted and invited to contribute to the database project and that it will remain open to other interested persons or institutions from academia, the military, and humanitarian organisations.

As a follow-up, a small two-day workshop was hosted by the CMME in Zurich on 29.02.-01.03.2016 with the aim of defining the outline of the MME scenario database project. The development of the current website was mainly based on the results of this workshop and the highly valuable input of the workshop participants. The first version of the database was published online in early 2017 and new cases and scenarios have regularly been added since then.

## MAIN AIMS OF THE COLLECTION

The MME scenario collection shall offer an environment that allows both to enter cases and observations and to access the scenario collection via database queries in order to get selected collections e.g. based on specific issues. Thus, the database aims on the one hand to offer a forum to (anonymously) report observations from missions. On the other hand, over the time and as the database will grow, it will offer trainers and researchers an extensive collection of issues and scenarios that are informed by real-world experiences and constitute actual ethical challenges in the field.

The scenarios which are currently published in the database have been collected from different sources: some are direct reports (e.g. from course participants or through the online submission form), others have been taken from media reports or films, and a certain number have also been published elsewhere and are republished in the collection. Authors of the scenarios are named if they wish to (or if the case has been published) or can remain anonymous if they prefer. Scenarios which are built on reports usually are

anonymized and geographic references and the like are blurred insofar as they are irrelevant for training and research.

In addition to the scenarios, short analyses and introductory comment documents on the ethical aspects of central issues (like mixed loyalties, medical rules of engagement etc.) shall be published to provide a basic guidance to analyse the scenarios or to use them during training. These documents will be linked to the relevant scenarios by the means of keywords and tags. The MME scenario collection shall thus be a tool for research and training and also provide an opportunity for both theory and practice to inform each other and to mutually benefit from each other.

## SCOPE OF THE SCENARIOS IN THE DATABASE

The scope of the scenarios and case studies, which are currently accessible in the database, is restricted to the field of military medical ethics. This means that the common denominator of the collected issues is to be found in the military context and in relation with the provision of medical care. Within that sphere, cases cover issues of combat related medical care as well as humanitarian missions or UN operations (PEO, PKO). The scenarios are sorted according to a list of categories that has been defined by the participants of the two workshops referred to above.

In a later phase, the collection could be extended (if this is deemed to be constructive and reasonable) to include similar issues from related civilian fields of work, for example the ethical challenges that humanitarian actors encounter during conflict situations or disaster relief missions. Their experiences and ethical issues in fact share similar features and are therefore of interest for military actors as well. Possibilities for cooperations with humanitarian actors will thus be explored in the future.

## TARGET AUDIENCE: WHO BENEFITS AND CONTRIBUTES?

The target audience of the case collection are practitioners like medical staff, other military and humanitarian actors as well as those who organize training and researchers in universities or think-tanks. Both groups can benefit in very different ways from the collected scenarios and their respective contributions are of great mutual value for the other group, too.

The Zurich Center for Military Medical Ethics (CMME) hosts, curates, and administrates the database. Access and usage of the collection is however open for other users (institutions and individuals) who may equally

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benefit from it. For that reason, other potentially interested actors have been involved in the development of the project from the beginning. A list of the partners and contributors to the MME scenario collection can be found at:

<https://scenarios.militarymedicaethics.ch//index.php?View=entry&EntryID=25>

## SUMMARY: HOW CAN YOU USE IT AND HOW CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE?

**Open access use:** The scenario collection is provided free of charge and as an open access website at <https://scenarios.militarymedicaethics.ch>.

Using the database is self-explanatory and easy, but you will also find a short introduction on the website.

**Contribute:** The scenario collection shall grow over time and we would like to regularly add new scenarios and cases. To do so, we need your support and input: you can help us to collect relevant examples and to stay up to date by contributing your own experiences and expertise. Please use the form provided on the website of the scenario collection.

Finally, if you have any questions or would like to get help in using the collection or in submitting your own cases, you can use the contact on the website or write an email directly to Dr. Daniel Messelken (CMME), who administrates and curates the collection.

## ABSTRACT

Scenarios are a key tool for education, training and

research in ethics. The presented collection of scenarios in military medical ethics constitutes a valuable resource for trainers and researchers. It shall support deploying military medical personnel and those who organise training and education to better prepare for missions.

To achieve this aim, the MME scenario collection

- collects and publishes experiences, reports, and scenarios in a searchable database and
- provides an opportunity for those returning from missions to (anonymously) contribute their experiences and to share it with others.
- Introductory texts and teaching and/or self-learning material shall be added over time.
- The thematic scope of the scenario collection could be extended to include ethical challenges of humanitarian actors, which are often similar to the experiences of their military counterparts.

## LINKS

- **Scenario Collection**, open access website with the scenario collection:

<https://scenarios.militarymedicaethics.ch>

- **Center for Military Medical Ethics** – host institution of the scenario collection:

<https://www.militarymedicaethics.ch>

- **ICMM Center of Reference for Education on IHL and Ethics** – partner of the scenario collection and provides the ICMM courses in MME:

<https://www.melac.ch>